



PROTESTING NIXON'S VISIT TO ROME. Demonstrators sit down in the heart of Rome February 27, facing line of police jeeps. More than 300 were arrested as thousands clashed with the 15,000 police mobilized to screen Nixon from the public. Demonstrations protesting the war in Vietnam and American imperialism

erupted wherever the president went in Europe. In Paris, Nixon's arrival was marked by the arrest of 200 persons. One high-school student, surprised by police while putting up anti-Nixon posters, was shot when he attempted to flee. Nixon confined his public appearances to crowds of American schoolchildren.

Nixon's Escalation of the War Answered by the Vietnamese

THE VIETNAMESE ANSWER NIXON'S ESCALATION OF THE WAR

On February 23 the National Liberation Front launched simultaneous rocket and mortar attacks on 115 cities and U.S. military installations throughout South Vietnam. These were followed by infantry assaults on selected American bases, some within a few miles of the heart of Saigon. In the first forty-eight hours almost 200 American GI's were killed. By March 1 the U.S. death toll topped 300 with more than 2,000 wounded. The U.S. command described the fighting as the heaviest in more than six months.

The new offensive clearly demonstrated the capacity of the NLF to strike at any time and any place in the country with devastating effect.

Washington's immediate response to the new setback was to accuse North Vietnam of sabotaging the search for "peace" and to threaten "reprisals." What the Nixon administration sought to cover up in this show of outrage was its own steady escalation of the war behind the screen of the Paris negotiations.

Johnson began the new escalation last October with his "Accelerated Pacification Campaign." When he "halted" the bombing of North Vietnam November 1, he stepped up the bombing of South Vietnam and Laos.

When Nixon took office, the Accelerated Pacification Campaign went into high gear. U.S. and Saigon troops began giant sweeps to install "Revolutionary Development Teams" on the village level and to "root out" the revolutionary committees elected by the population. It was this campaign of massive rural occupation that produced the glowing reports from Saigon on the new "successes" of the pacification program. The March 3 issue of Newsweek, for example, claimed that "79.2 per cent" of the South Vietnamese population were under "relatively secure" control by the Saigon dictatorship -- a big jump from the figures claimed three months ago.

The same issue of Newsweek admitted that these figures, while showing a vast American military operation, might be meaningless as a real indicator of NLF strength in the countryside:

"This undeniable successful story, however, does have its mysterious aspects. 'In many cases,' cabled Newsweek's Gordon Chaplin last week, 'the Viet Cong have simply melted away with nothing more than token resistance....'"

Nixon's strategy has been to stall the Paris talks while intensifying the attacks in Vietnam. Joseph C. Harsch, Wash-

ington correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor, wrote in the January 18-20 issue of the Boston daily that Nixon planned to wait until "sometime in July or August" before revealing his "formula" for ending the war. He evidently hoped that the "formula" could be the unconditional surrender of the liberation forces.

The NLF actually reduced the level of fighting at the beginning of the year. Harsch speculated that this was to reinforce a demand that the U.S. do likewise.

"On the Hanoi side," Harsch wrote, "there must have been grave anxiety about the use the American forces in South Vietnam would make of the decline in pressure on them. In fact the opportunity has been used in a vigorous effort to clean out a lot of Viet Cong holdings."

Nixon's decision to press a "quiet" escalation of the war was further confirmed by Tristram Coffin, writing from Washington in the liberal American weekly The Nation March 3.

"The real story of Vietnam," Coffin said, "is that the United States has again escalated the war, in the face of disengagement from the other side. President Nixon has given in to the advice of his old friend, Gen. Andrew J. Goodpaster...."

"According to Republican legislators who have talked to Mr. Nixon, he apparently sees Vietnam as a problem in public relations and American politics. General Goodpaster has convinced him that victory can be won in Vietnam."

According to Coffin's sources, Nixon regards the Paris talks as a convenient fraud to provide cover for his attempts to crush the Vietnamese revolution, with years of fighting still to come:

"The President reportedly expects a military victory in Vietnam within a year or two. His job as he sees it is two-fold: to razzle and dazzle the populace so that it will not complain about the... [U.S. casualty] statistics, and to get the war over at least six months before launching his campaign for re-election. He also has a short-term goal. He hopes to put together by midsummer a relatively tough U.S. ultimatum for the Paris talks....The timing is significant. Nixon expects the U.S. military position to be so improved by summer that he can call the tune in Paris....While President Nixon smiles upon the populace, ominous events are taking place in Vietnam. The order of the day is escalation."

The new counteroffensive by the

National Liberation Front has dealt a heavy blow to these schemes. On February 26 NLF soldiers breached the perimeter of the big American base at Cuchi only twenty miles from Saigon. Heavy fighting took place the same day at Bienhoa airbase just north of Saigon.

In addition to heavy losses in killed and wounded, American units lost large quantities of ammunition, artillery pieces, helicopters, and other matériel.

In Saigon the Thieu regime reacted by further tightening the dictatorial thumbscrews. Police raided a Buddhist youth center February 23, arresting the monk Thich Thien Minh and more than fifty youths. The next day about fifty university students were arrested near Anquang Pagoda in Saigon. Police officials also announced the arrest of forty-three persons in Cholon.

In Washington the new setback on the battlefield provided an excuse to escalate the war further. The New York Times reported February 25 that a "list of possible retaliatory military actions" had been prepared by the Defense Department for the National Security Council. The Times said: "All of the military moves involve some form of selective bombing of North Vietnam."

The options for these "selective" attacks included such choices as "raids against military targets, including bridges, warehouses, power plants or airfields in the vicinity of Hanoi," and "attacks on the Red River dikes, after preliminary warning was given to people living along the Red River Valley to move to high ground to avoid being caught in floods."

The Nixon administration threatened February 27 that if the NLF offensive was not called off, the "understanding" on which the bombing halt was based would be considered to have "expired."

Administration officials claimed that North Vietnam had agreed to prevent the shelling of South Vietnamese cities by the NLF as an "understood" condition of the bombing halt. Hanoi replied that the bombing halt had been unconditional.

A North Vietnamese Foreign Affairs Ministry statement February 25 reaffirmed that the "South Vietnamese people have the right to fight against the United States aggression at any place on Vietnamese territory." The ministry added that the South Vietnamese people "will fight on as long as there is a single United States aggressor on Vietnamese soil. That is the Vietnamese people's inalienable right of self-defense."

In Paris, Xuan Thuy, the head of

the North Vietnamese delegation to the negotiations, declared that "the present Administration is more stubborn and perfidious than the previous one in intensifying the war."

Even the New York Times found it hard to swallow the pretext being used by Washington to prepare a renewal of the bombing of North Vietnam. In a lengthy March 1 editorial it took up "That Vietnam 'Understanding.'" The Nixon administration, the Times said, "owes it to itself and to the country to clear up an ambiguity surrounding the so-called 'understanding' that halted American bombing of North Vietnam...."

"This ambiguity served the Johnson Administration as a means of veiling from American opinion its diplomatic retreat on the bombing issue. The Nixon Administration had nothing to gain -- and the country has much to lose -- by keeping alive the myth that Hanoi entered into some sort of agreement to refrain from attacks against South Vietnamese cities and across the Demilitarized Zone...."

"The facts appear clear enough, despite the verbal fog that has enveloped them. The Johnson Administration vainly sought for three years a specific commitment from Hanoi that it would refrain from certain military operations if American bombing of the North stopped. Finally, the Administration did what its critics had long urged: It informed Hanoi unilaterally that a bombing halt, once instituted, 'simply could not be sustained' if there were abuses of the DMZ or attacks on South Vietnamese cities...."

"The American military command in South Vietnam is under instruction to maintain maximum military pressure against the Communists. When the enemy response is relatively light, there is a tendency toward wishful thinking that military victory is close at hand. When the Communists react strongly, there is a temptation to cry 'foul' and warn that the Paris peace talks are endangered."

Nixon, like his predecessor, would like to drag the American people deeper into the imperialist military adventure in Southeast Asia. He will reconsider and draw back only if he suffers a military defeat at the hands of the freedom fighters in Vietnam or a political defeat at the hands of the American people.

The war in Vietnam will be ended when the United States gets out. With their new thrusts against the aggressors, the Vietnamese people have made a big contribution toward convincing Nixon that it is the part of wisdom to pull back.

The American antiwar movement can give him some prods along the same line.

Major antiwar demonstrations have been called by a broad coalition of organizations for April 6 in a number of U.S.

cities. Every opponent of the war should be on hand to oppose the new escalation and to demand that the GI's be brought home now!

THE CHINESE-SOVIET CLASH ON THE USSURI RIVER

The clash between Soviet and Chinese troops on the Ussuri River March 2 marks a new low in the relations between Moscow and Peking.

According to Tass, "An armed Chinese unit crossed the Soviet state frontier and proceeded toward Damansky Island. The Chinese side suddenly opened fire at Soviet border guards guarding the area. There are killed and wounded. By the resolute actions of Soviet border guards the violators of the frontier were chased from Soviet territory."

The Soviet government protested the action in a note filed with the Chinese government.

The Chinese government rejected the Soviet note and filed a counter protest. According to a Peking radio broadcast, reported from Hong Kong March 3, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said that a large number of Soviet border guards in armored cars and trucks had intruded into "undisputably Chinese territory" and carried out a "frantic provocation" against Chinese border guards on patrol. The Soviet troops fired first, and "a number of Chinese troops were killed and wounded."

The Chinese note declared that after giving the Soviet border guards repeated warnings without results, the Chinese guards returned the fire in self-defense.

The Soviet government said that the area where the clash occurred was Nizhnemikhailovka. The Chinese specified it as Chentapao. It appears to be an island, created by the meandering of the Ussuri River which marks the border between the Northeast provinces of China and the Soviet Union's Maritime Territory. The Chinese government claims that the entire Soviet Far Eastern region was illegally seized by the Czars through treaties imposed on the weak nineteenth-century Chinese regimes.

Which of the two governments is to blame for this scandalous incident? It will not be easy to determine whether a provocation was committed by one side or the other, or which side fired first. Neither government will likely agree to an investigation by a third party, even one consisting of representatives of "fraternal" Communist parties.

It can be said for the Chinese that they have good cause to be suspicious of Moscow in view of the invasion

of Czechoslovakia and the promulgation by Moscow's spokesmen of the doctrine of "limited sovereignty" for any "socialist" country which the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime considers to be slipping toward capitalism. The Moscow press has been loudly charging that Mao is serving the interests of U.S. imperialism.

In addition, Moscow has apparently been moving large numbers of troops into position along the eastern frontier with China. Peter Grose, the Washington correspondent of the New York Times, reported March 2 that "Western intelligence analysts" said the military build-up "had been conducted even at the expense of Soviet preparedness in central Europe."

The Chinese government no doubt also bears in mind the ruthlessness with which Khrushchev cut off material aid to China in the opening stage of the Sino-Soviet dispute, not to mention Moscow's policy of seeking an understanding with U.S. imperialism at the expense of China in the field of nuclear deterrents.

On Moscow's side it can be argued that Stalin's heirs are in very good position to judge Mao's capacity for treachery. He stands, as they do, for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. If Washington decides to make an "opening" in Mao's direction, the Moscow bureaucrats have no reason to doubt that he would respond at their expense exactly as they have already responded at his expense and as they would do if they were in his shoes.

The Maoist propaganda depicting the Soviet Union as a "capitalist" power following imperialist policies provides the theoretical justification for reaching an understanding with U.S. imperialism at the expense of the USSR. According to this theory, Mao would merely be seeking to take advantage of interimperialist contradictions which, as Lenin taught, is completely justifiable and necessary for a workers state encircled by hostile capitalist powers.

Only U.S. imperialism profits from this situation. And it will do its utmost to embroil Moscow and Peking still deeper in their fratricidal conflict.

The two regimes, caught up in the narrow national interests of the parasitic Chinese and Russian bureaucracies which they represent, are once again displaying how distant they are from the internationalism needed to defend and advance the world socialist revolution.

PERU'S BIGGEST POLITICAL TRIAL

The Peruvian Council of War handed down sentences February 16 against thirty-six peasants accused of collaborating with the guerrilla movement led by Guillermo Lobatón and Máximo Velando in 1965. The council's verdict closed the biggest political trial in the history of the country. It provided the first major indication of the sort of justice the new military regime intends to apply.

Guillermo Loardo Avedano was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and Cirilo Campos and Pablo Torres were given twelve-year terms. The others received terms of two to four years. It is not yet known whether the other twenty-two defendants in the trial have been released or are still to be sentenced.

The prisoners were part of a still larger group of peasants arrested en masse by the army in areas where the guerrillas had been active.

Some died in prison. One, Claudio Clavo, has not been seen since police took him from his cell in December 1965. His name was not read at the trial nor is it on the list of "missing guerrillas."

The peasants were held in the ill-famed prison of Huancayo from the fall of 1965 until they were finally put on trial. Undernourished and without medical care, many of them contracted serious chronic illnesses. During this time, they were subjected to constant harassment and intimidation as well as frequent torture by their jailers.

They were completely cut off from the outside world. Relatives were permitted to visit them but rarely, and then were granted only five minutes. Visitors were separated from the prisoners by a heavy grill and had to speak in the presence of guards.

Many of the prisoners' families fled into the mountains at the approach of government troops and now, four years later, are still hiding in caves and deserted villages. Most of the men have no idea what has happened to their families.

Of the prisoners put on trial, three were so ill as to be unable to defend themselves. Mauro Sebastian and Raymundo Estrada, stricken with tuberculosis, could hardly stand up. According to observers from the Peruvian Comité de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos [CODDEH -- Committee for the Defense of Human Rights], they were trembling and sweating feverishly throughout the trial. Guillermo Loardo Avedano, who received the heaviest sentence, is also gravely ill with tuberculosis which he contracted in prison.

Many prisoners testified that they had confessed to crimes or implicated other persons only under torture. Pablo Cordoba said that he was threatened with death if he did not say that Jaime Herrera Mendoza killed Major Patiño and an army sergeant in an ambush at Pucutá.

Cirilo Campos testified that the Civil Guards had tortured him and threatened to kill him if he did not confess to buying arms and explosives.

Timoteo Flores Campos testified that he had been tortured by the police. The military judge interrupted him, calling him a liar.

A number of prisoners told harrowing stories of the reign of terror conducted by government troops in areas of guerrilla activity. Santos Paucarcajo testified that the Civil Guards raped his fourteen-year-old daughter and that she bore an illegitimate child as a result.

Flores Campos testified that the Civil Guards raped his cousins, Victoria, who was nineteen years old, and Maura, who was twenty. Evaristo Carhuacho Valverde said that the soldiers raped his sister in his presence and that the government troops stole ten cows and 800 sheep from him.

He said that his parents died of hunger during his imprisonment, although he had been a fairly well-off peasant before the "pacification."

The trial was conducted entirely in the local Indian language, Quechua, since few of the prisoners knew any Spanish. According to the CODDEH observers, the government interpreters translated the questions to the prisoners badly, and often distorted their replies.

One of the few prisoners who knew some Spanish, Cirilo Campos, declared that he could not understand the meaning of the words "nation," "state security," "extremists," or "guerrillas." When the presiding judge asked him what his concept of a guerrilla was, he answered, "What is a concept?"

Despite the efforts of the military judges and court officials to restrict and distort the testimony of the accused, the peasants' stories became so damning to the army that the civil prosecutor, Máximo Ruiz Cornejo Santillán, dissociated himself from the case. On February 8, he walked out in the middle of a session, announcing that he no longer wanted to represent the Ministry of Justice in this trial. The Council of War was forced to appoint a deputy prosecutor.

ELECTION FAILS TO END CRISIS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

By Gerry Foley

Whatever the final distribution of the forty-five seats contested in the February 24 parliamentary elections in Northern Ireland may be, two things are clear.

First, the civil-rights struggle of the past few months has gravely shaken the hold of the traditional opposition, the Nationalists, over the oppressed Catholic minority and has opened the way for dynamic struggle against the British imperial system still surviving in this northeast corner of Ireland.

Second, the attempt by Northern Irish Prime Minister Terence O'Neill, the leader of the pro-British Unionist party, to absorb the movement for change into a broad coalition behind the moderate wing of his party has failed.

Incomplete returns indicate that the Nationalist party suffered a disastrous defeat, losing at least three and perhaps five of its nine seats in parliament. For more than forty years this clerically dominated party had contained the struggle of the mostly Catholic poorer strata of the Northern Irish working class within narrowly conservative and sectarian limits.

Almost all the Nationalists' losses seem to have gone to the more militant opposition forces, since the total for the pro-British Unionists remained about the same. Nationalist party leader Edward McAteer himself lost his seat to John Hume, the vice-chairman of the Derry Citizens Action Committee, who ran as an independent. Ivan Cooper, the chairman of this committee and a Protestant, also ran as an independent and won a seat. The Derry Citizens Action Committee has been one of the main organizations leading the civil-rights movement for ending discrimination against the 34 percent Catholic minority in Northern Ireland and for instituting social reforms.

The most militant wing of the civil-rights movement, the students of the People's Democracy group (PD), ran candidates in eleven districts and won a surprising success. PD also broke a long precedent in Northern Irish politics by opposing the two main Northern Irish parties, the Unionists and the Nationalists, in traditionally uncontested districts. Michael Farrell, a twenty-four-year-old university lecturer and the leader of PD, won 2,300 votes in the solidly Unionist district of Bannside against 7,745 for Captain O'Neill and 6,631 for the ultra-right Protestant candidate, the Reverend Ian Paisley.

As a result of the caste system on which the existence of the Northern Irish statelet is based, nearly half of the candidates in parliamentary elections have



THE REV. IAN PAISLEY

always run unopposed. Nationalist candidates have not run in predominantly Protestant districts. Unionist candidates have not run in Catholic districts.

The division between Catholics and Protestants was driven deep by the British imperialist system. Using Protestants as the instruments of its rule in Ireland and according them privileges in accordance with this function, British imperialism succeeded in hardening the religious difference until it assumed virtually a caste character, similar in some respects to racism.

The Unionist, or Protestant, party is committed to maintain the union with Britain on which the Protestants' privileges have traditionally depended. The Nationalist, or Catholic party, is formally pledged to union with the rest of Ireland, which is overwhelmingly Catholic. In fact, the Nationalists and their clerical mentors have long since accommodated themselves to the caste-state which assured them undisputed control of the Catholic population. Until the development of the militant civil-rights movement, these two parties coexisted as harmoniously as the fictions necessary to both sides permitted.

The high PD vote was all the more significant because it represented a total rejection of the Northern Irish political system. The PD candidates denounced the election, as they denounce all elections in Northern Ireland, as essentially undemocratic because of the gerrymandering and caste fanaticism that maintains one-party Unionist rule. They ran, they declared, primarily to build a nonsectarian mass movement that could transform Northern Irish society, not to win seats in parliament.

The ultraright wing of the Unionists also scored successes in the elections, testifying to the polarization which the civil-rights movement has produced. Moderate Unionists who ran as independents against right-wing Unionist MP's hostile to the flexible line espoused by O'Neill, did not do nearly so well as expected. The rightist bloc, which is irreconcilably opposed to any relaxation of authoritarian caste rule, will be as strong in the new parliament as in the last. The leader of the most virulent Catholic-baiters, Ian Paisley, who ran as an independent Unionist against O'Neill, polled an unexpectedly high vote, coming within 1,100 votes of defeating him.

The strong showing of the ultraright will undoubtedly cause problems for the Northern Irish ruling class and, in particular, for their English protectors who are more vulnerable to world public opinion. However, the worst result of the elections from their viewpoint was the

failure of the Catholic workers to respond to the reformist alternative offered by O'Neill.

The English and Northern Irish capitalists had hoped that this election would provide an opportunity to broaden the political basis of their rule in the Northern Irish enclave. They had hoped that in view of the Dublin government's now more or less explicit abandonment of the goal of a united Ireland and O'Neill's promises of a more liberal policy in the North, the Catholic population would back the moderate Unionists running against right-wing Unionist candidates.

This would have had the advantage, from the Northern Irish and British establishment's point of view, of diverting the struggle of the most exploited section of the Northern Irish working class into pro-imperialist channels and of removing the embarrassment of having to maintain a quasi-racist semipolice state as the basis of its control of the area.

This desire was expressed in the inimitable style of a "moderate" in the best Anglo-Saxon tradition by Lord Reay, writing in the liberal British weekly the New Statesman on February 21: "The exciting feature [of the Northern Irish elections] is that the Catholic population may at last implicate itself in an acceptance of the country's political institutions [British rule] by voting for O'Neill. If it does so, then the chance of the country resolving itself ultimately into stable political groupings immediately increases."

A NEW VERSION OF THE MURDER OF CARLO TRESCA

By Les Evans

On February 14, Vito Genovese, the reputed boss of the Mafia, died in prison in Springfield, Missouri. The death of the seventy-one-year-old racketeer provided the newspapers with an opportunity to moralize about the evils of organized crime while scarcely concealing their admiration for Genovese's rise from rags to riches in the best tradition of American capitalist free enterprise.

The New York Post ran a series of six full-page articles by Anthony Scaduto, tracing the mobster's life from his start, bootlegging liquor during prohibition days, to his first conviction and prison sentence in 1959, some thirty years later.

Among his many other crimes, Genovese is charged by the Post with complicity in the murder of Carlo Tresca, the famous Italian anarchist leader, who was gunned down in New York in 1943.

Tresca's murder has never been officially "solved." He was hated by the fascists because of his fierce opposition to Mussolini and his wide influence among Italian-American workers. He had also been attacked by the Communist party and the Soviet bureaucrats because of his relentless exposure of the Moscow frame-up trials and the murder of anarchist leaders in Spain by the Soviet secret police.

The New York Post version is that Genovese had Tresca murdered as a favor to Mussolini. Genovese returned to Italy in 1937 to avoid an investigation into a 1934 murder in New York. "He spent the war years," Scaduto wrote in the February 27 Post, "as an ex-officio helpmate to a new-found friend -- Benito Mussolini.

"The Italian period would probably still be buried in old hush-hush U.S. War Dept. files if it weren't for the burning

curiosity of Orange C. Dickey, a young agent in the Army's Criminal Investigation Division....

"Among the items of interest that Dickey and other investigators uncovered about Vito's Italian 'vacation' were:

"Genovese was made a Commendatore because of large donations he made to the Fascist government, and certain services he performed....

"One of the services he performed for Mussolini was the murder of Carlo Tresca, who was shot to death at Fifth Av. and 15th St. on a January night in 1943. Tresca was the publisher here of an anarchist newspaper and he expressed his hatred of fascism and communism with equal passion. The paper, Il Martello (The Hammer), did much to undermine Mussolini with the large Italian colony in the U.S. Mafia-watchers say Mussolini wanted Tresca silenced and that Genovese said it could be done for \$500,000, got the money, and sent the necessary word to New York."

Variants of this story have circulated for years, although the figure is usually given as \$300,000. This is the first time Genovese's name has been linked with the killing. The Post did not reveal the nature of its evidence and authorities have not indicated that they intend to reopen the case.

Carlo Tresca had a long and distinguished record of service to the cause of working-class emancipation. Before the first world war he won fame as a leader of the bitter strikes of the textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey. He played an important role in strike struggles of the iron miners in Minnesota's Mesabi Range. During his many years in the labor movement, Tresca was arrested more than thirty times.

"IT WAS MAXIMO VELANDO"

The truth about the 1965 assassination of the Peruvian guerrilla leader Máximo Velando emerged in testimony at the recent trial of fifty-eight peasants in Lima accused of cooperating with the guerrillas in 1965. The official government version has always been that Velando committed suicide on December 5, 1965, in a prison at Suxique. It was generally believed that he was murdered by the police.

Jorge Miranda Balbín, one of the defendants in the present case, told the military court February 11 that he was a witness to the murder of the guerrilla leader, which took place at Satipo Airport.

He always remained loyal to the credo that "an injury to one is an injury to all." He never refused his aid to victims of capitalist injustice because they did not share his anarchist views. Carlo Tresca was one of the first to join in the defense campaign for Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings. He worked closely with James P. Cannon in the International Labor Defense in the worldwide effort to save Sacco and Vanzetti.

Tresca did not hate "communism." What he hated was the gangster methods of Stalinism. He published evidence that the assassination of the Spanish anarchist philosopher Camillo Berneri was carried out by an American Stalinist working with the GPU.

During the Moscow Trials, Carlo Tresca became one of the ten members of the Commission of Inquiry headed by John Dewey. The commission heard testimony from Trotsky in Mexico. It thoroughly investigated the charges concocted by the GPU against Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov, and proved them to be false.

On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, April 19, 1939, Carlo Tresca received birthday greetings from another revolutionary leader, also an exile who was soon to die at the hand of Stalin's secret political police. Leon Trotsky wrote:

"Dear Comrade Tresca:

"In spite of all the profound divergences, which neither you nor I have the habitude to deny or attenuate, I hope that you will permit me to express the deepest esteem for you, as for a man who is every inch a fighter. Your sixtieth birthday is being celebrated by your friends, and I take the liberty of counting myself among them."

Miranda was held at the same prison as Velando. He testified that "bound hand and foot and blindfolded, Velando and I were taken from the prison to the local airport and informed that we were being taken to Jauja. As soon as we reached the airport, I was thrown into a plane and the blindfold was removed....

"Less than two minutes later there was machine-gun fire, and then a motionless body wrapped in a bloody blanket was thrown down next to me. One guard uncovered the face, which the wounds made practically unrecognizable. It was Máximo Velando."

THE "MINI-GENERAL ELECTION" IN INDIA

By Kailas Chandra

Bombay

The United Front in West Bengal, dominated by the pro-Peking Left Communist party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], secured an absolute majority of 214 seats in the 280-member Legislative Assembly in the midterm election which concluded February 9, an outcome not equaled by the Congress party even in its heyday.

In Uttar Pradesh, the home state of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Congress party emerged as the largest single party in the 425-member Legislative Assembly. It secured 208 seats, with five seats from hill regions still to be filled. It has not secured an absolute majority, which would enable it to form a ministry of its own without the support of other political parties.

In Bihar, another major Hindi-speaking state, none of the political parties has secured a decisive majority in the legislature to form a government. The Congress party has, however, emerged as the largest single party with 118 seats in a 318-member house, with the Samyukta Socialist party following it as the second party with 52 seats.

In Punjab, the Akali Dal -- a communal formation of the Sikhs -- which had an alliance with the Hindu communal Jan Sangh, has emerged as the largest single group, having won 43 seats in a 104-member assembly. The Jan Sangh won another nine seats. An Akali-Jan Sangh coalition has already been sworn into office.

Thus the "mini-general election" that was held in four north Indian states has not altered the basic political pattern that emerged immediately after the general election in 1967. In none of the states has the Congress, the ruling bourgeois party at the centre, been able to secure a decisive majority.

The total collapse of the Congress in West Bengal has compelled some of the top local party leaders to resign from key positions. Atulya Ghosh, leader of the right-wing faction inside the party -- called the "Syndicate" -- resigned from the Working Committee of the Central Election Committee of the Congress party.

The victory of the United Front in West Bengal came as a surprise even to its left constituents, who did not expect such spectacular support. The most impressive performance was that of the CPI(M), which emerged as the single largest party, capturing 80 out of the 97 seats it contested. Four independents supported by

the CPI(M) also won. In the previous assembly the CPI(M) had only 47 members. [See Table I.]

The Congress party, which fielded candidates in all the 280 constituencies, was able to secure only 55 seats, technically becoming the second party in the as-

TABLE I

February 9 Election Results
West Bengal -- 280-Seat Assembly

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats in</u> <u>New</u> <u>Assembly</u>	<u>Seats in</u> <u>Old</u> <u>Assembly</u>
<u>United Front</u>		
Communist party of India (Marxist)	80	47
Bangla Congress Communist party of India (pro-Moscow)	33	34
Forward Bloc Revolutionary Socialist party	30	16
Samyukta Socialist party	21	13
Socialist party	12	6
Socialist Unity Centre Revolutionary Communist party	9	7
Workers party	7	4
Gurkha League	2	0
Lok Sevak Sangh	2	
Forward Bloc (Marxist)	5	
Independents	4	
	1	
	8	
<u>Total</u>	<u>214</u>	
<u>Non-United Front</u>		
Congress party	55	127
Praja Socialist party	5*	
Progressive Muslim League**	3	0
Indian National Democratic Front***	1	
Independents	2	
Jan Sangh****	0	1
Swatantra party****	0	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>66</u>	

* Four of the 5 PSP members elected were supported by the UF.

** A new communal group that emerged after the 1967 elections. It contested 50 seats.

*** Formed by right-wing defectors of the United Front.

**** Extreme right-wing bourgeois.

sembly. In the 1967 elections, the Congress failed to get an absolute majority but still retained its position as the single largest party with 127 seats.

Almost all the United Front [UF] parties were able to improve their positions as compared to the previous assembly (which was dissolved by the centre). An exception was the Bangla Congress, a formation of dissident Congress party supporters, which won only 33 seats against 34 in the last assembly. But in view of heavy defections from its ranks, its performance was surprisingly good. The party was able to defeat fifteen of its own defectors.

Jyoti Basu, leader of the CPI(M), was returned, defeating his Congress rival by an impressive margin of 70,000 votes. Pratap Chandra Chandu, president of the West Bengal Congress Committee, was defeated by the Revolutionary Socialist party's Jatin Chakravarty.

It must be remembered, however, that the UF in West Bengal was more united in 1969 than it was in 1967, which also explains its greater margin of victory. In 1967 there were two separate fronts contending with each other against the Congress party in the state -- one led by the CPI(M) and the other by the CPI-Bangla Congress. This time the constituents of both fronts were united.

In terms of popular votes the Congress party has not lost ground. It appears to have secured 42.4 percent in 1969 as against 41.3 percent in 1967,

TABLE II

February 9 Election Results
Uttar Pradesh -- 425-Seat Assembly

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats</u>
Congress party	208
Bharatiya Kranti Dal	98
Jan Sangh	48*
Swatantra party	33**
Communist party of India	4***
Praja Socialist party	3
Communist party of India (Marxist)	1
Independents	20****
Others	10
Total	425

* Reduced from 99 in the last assembly.

** Reduced from 44 in the last assembly.

*** Held 10 seats in previous assembly.

**** Some may join the Congress party.

even in West Bengal. A correct estimate of the percentage polled by the UF this time cannot be made as yet. But the major constituents of the UF, including the two CPI's, Bangla Congress, Forward Bloc, RSP, SSP, etc., together polled about 45 percent of the total votes. Independents and smaller groups account for about 10 percent. A final tally of votes polled by different parties in the four states has yet to be made.

According to reports from New Delhi, industrial and business circles have reacted with considerable uneasiness to the spectacular victory of the United Front in West Bengal.

Bharat Ram, a powerful industrialist of northern India, is reported to have said that the victory of the Communists and their allies was something not likely to do any good for industry. He added, however, that he "hoped that the United Front would pursue a more practical policy." G.D. Birla, India's number one industrialist, who has reached an understanding with the Namboodiripad CPI(M) ministry in Kerala, on the other hand expressed a "less pessimistic" view of the performance of the UF government from the point of view of the capitalist class. He seems to think that the bourgeoisie will

TABLE III

February 9 Election Results
Bihar -- 318-Seat Assembly

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats</u>
Congress party	118
Samyukta Socialist party	52*
Jan Sangh	34
Communist party of India	25**
Praja Socialist party	17
Janata party***	16
Soshit Dal****	6
Communist party of India (Marxist)	3
Swatantra party	3
Lok Tantra Dal	3
Others	41
Total	318

* The SSP, the PSP and the Lok Tantra Dal were in an electoral bloc.

** The CPI and the CPI(M) were in an electoral bloc.

*** An opportunist grouping led by a former prince.

**** This group once formed a minority government in Bihar with the support of the Congress, the Janata party, and the PSP.

be able to reach a modus vivendi even with the Left CPI-dominated ministry.

In spite of its spectacular victory, the UF has not succeeded in forming its government so far (more than a week after the poll results were announced) because of a dispute between the CPI(M) as the leading party and the Bangla Congress as to who should head the government as its chief minister. At first the CPI(M) insisted on having the chief ministership, but later it reconciled itself to the idea of having Ajoy Mukherjee of the Bangla Congress -- who also headed the last ministry -- as the chief minister, provided the CPI(M) would have exclusive control of the Home portfolio. This condition is also not acceptable to other groups.

Some sort of horse trading is going on about distribution of portfolios among the constituents of the UF and there is a move to prevent the CPI(M) from holding the entire Home portfolio. The CPI(M) has reacted to this manoeuvre by suggesting that it would keep out of the UF ministry but support it in the legislature. Other groups are not anxious to form a government without CPI(M) participation.*

Although the Congress has emerged as the largest single party in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, its ranks are sharply divided, with a section rebelling against the leadership of former Congress Chief Minister C.B. Gupta, who is supposed to head the new government. One "positive" feature in UP is the relative eclipse of the Hindu communal party Jan Sangh. The Bharatiya Kranti Dal, formed by dissident members from the Congress party under the leadership of Charan Singh (the chief minister of the last non-Congress government), has emerged as the second largest party with 98 seats in the new assembly. [See Table II.]

A "United Front" of the Akali Dal and Jan Sangh, supported by some independents, has formed a ministry in the border state of Punjab. Unlike in the last assembly, the pro-Moscow Communist party

of India [CPI], which won three seats in the new legislature, has refused to join the government on the grounds that it will not have any alliance with the Jan Sangh. The CPI(M) won two seats, but the party's policy is to keep out of any coalition where it has no dominant voice. It has refused to enter into any coalition with right-wing bourgeois parties. The SSP won two seats in the Punjab assembly, while one each went to the PSP and Swatantra party.

In Bihar, however, the party position is more complex than it was after 1967. The midterm poll has provided a solution to the stalemate that led to the imposition of president's rule in the state last year.

The Congress party was returned, reduced in size. The Samyukta Socialist party emerged as the second party with 52 seats. Together with its electoral partners [see Table III], it controls 72 seats. Their policy for the present is to keep out of any coalition with the Congress. The Jan Sangh has offered to join a Congress-led coalition. A fierce horse trading continues in Bihar.

The overall trend of the midterm poll in the four major states can be summed up as follows:

There is a greater polarisation of political forces. The Congress as the major party of the Indian bourgeoisie has lost its monopoly of power and it is left with no other alternative but to seek coalitions with other bourgeois or middle-class parties.

The traditional left parties -- especially the two CPI's -- retain their strong pockets of support but their opportunist, class-collaborationist policies prevent them from utilizing their strength, from moving in the direction of a determined struggle against the bourgeois state. This, however, does not rule out a new process of differentiation among the left parties, between the two CPI's, RSP, SUC, etc. (particularly in West Bengal), and their petty-bourgeois and bourgeois allies like the SSP, PSP, Bangla Congress, etc.

It must be noted that the CPI(M) has not lost its popular support because of the defection of the Maoist Naxalite groups in West Bengal and the formation of a third, Maoist CP in India. The Maoists advocated a slogan of "boycotting" elections and for a while it appeared as if the Maoists might upset the electoral chances of the CPI(M) and its allies in the UF. Evidently the sectarian-anarchist "boycott" slogan did not cut much ice with the electorate even in the Naxalite strongholds in West Bengal.

* The United Front announced February 20 that Ajoy Mukherjee had been elected chief minister and Jyoti Basu, the CPI(M) leader, was made deputy chief minister. The Home department was divided among various parties, but the key branches of police and general administration were taken by the CPI(M). A thirty-two member government was installed February 25 in which the CPI(M) held nine cabinet posts. In addition to police and general administration, the CPI(M) also holds portfolios for Labor, Land Revenue, Education, and Food. The chief minister holds the Finance portfolio. The right-wing CPI holds four cabinet posts. -- I.P.

It would appear that wherever the Maoists were strong they advised the voters to either boycott the elections or to vote for the Congress candidates to defeat the "revisionist" CPI and CPI(M) -- whom the Maoists consider to be their

"main enemies" rather than obstacles in the struggle against capitalism.

The poll outcome in West Bengal has thrown the Naxalite Maoists throughout the country into disarray.

STUDENT STRUGGLE FLARES IN SANTO DOMINGO

Santo Domingo

Despite the intimidation, repression, and terror which have become the norms of Dominican life, student, worker, and peasant struggles showed a powerful upturn in the latter part of February.

Most dramatic of these was the struggle at the national university, the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo [Autonomous University of Santo Domingo], which sparked mobilizations of university and high-school students throughout the country and set a new and vital example for the Dominican revolutionary movement.

The origin of the struggle at the national university was the demand for a larger appropriation from the government. In 1964, the legislature appropriated 500,000 pesos [the Dominican peso is on a par with the U.S. dollar] to support a university of 3,500 students. In 1969, it allotted 330,000 pesos, with the university's enrollment now at 11,000 students.

This led to the development of a spontaneous student movement. It marked a new, higher stage in the development of the students' political consciousness. They refused to be imposed on by the sectarian groups, heavily influenced by Maoism, which had dominated the campus, and demanded unity in action. The slogans raised in demonstrations were: "Unity Above Party Labels!" "Down With the Leaders!" "Mobilizations Without Terrorism!" "Let the Masses Decide!"

Along with the spontaneous rejection of sectarianism, an important step toward united action was taken by the different political organizations on the campus. The following three groups formed a united front: the Bloque Universitario Revolucionario Cristiano [Christian Revolutionary Student bloc], which supports the ideas of the Colombian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres; the Partido Comunista Dominicano [Dominican Communist party], which maintains an independent position in the Sino-Soviet dispute; and the Movimiento Popular Dominicano [Dominican People's Movement], which is Maoist.

The current student movement shows the influence of the May-June 1968 student actions in France and the struggles

this year and last in the American universities and has certain affinities with them. The American influence is observable in its independent spirit and insistence on united action. The French influence is especially shown in its awareness of the need to combine the demand for structural change in the universities with the struggle for fundamental change in the broader society.

In a joint communiqué, the three political groups declared:

"It is necessary to link up the fight for a larger appropriation for the university with the overall struggle of the people to oust the Balaguer government and for a revolution that will break with the existing structures. The current university struggle must embrace the cause of our people's liberation from Yankee domination, support for the workers' fight against the austerity law, support for the dock workers in their struggle against mechanization, for the peasants in their land occupations, and for all forms of struggle against our subservient capitalist system."

Two political groups, however, have shown a notably negative attitude toward the development of a united, democratic, mass student movement. The pro-Soviet Partido Socialista Popular [People's Socialist party] has been conspicuous in its attempts to ignore this development. The Pacoredo [Partido Comunista de la Republica Dominicana -- Communist party of the Dominican Republic -- ultra-Maoists], on the other hand, have distinguished themselves by their resistance to the idea of unity, a resistance which the student masses brushed aside.

The student movement at the national university, which mobilized more than 5,000 students and stood up to police repression in the streets of Santo Domingo, has had repercussions throughout the country.

High-school students in the following places went on strike and demonstrated in the streets in support of the demands raised by the students at the national university: Santiago, the second largest city in the country; San Pedro de Macoris in the east; San Francisco de Macoris in the northeast; Bonao in the central part

of the country; San Cristóbal, which is about fifteen miles from Santo Domingo; and other towns. The students at the Catholic high schools of San Cristóbal and Santiago and the Universidad Católica de Santiago [Catholic University of Santiago] also declared their support for the national university students. In Santo Domingo itself, many lightning street demonstrations were held in support of the national university students' struggle.

Simultaneous with the student struggle, a broad, militant peasant movement has been developing. The peasants in the eastern part of the country have been carrying out land occupations under the slogan, "The Land to Those Who Work It!"

This movement has received the backing of the Catholic church, and a priest in the region recently upheld the right to struggle for the land by violent means if necessary.

In the third week in February, a peasant congress sponsored by FEDELAC [Federación de Ligas Agrarias Cristianas -- Federation of Christian Peasant Leagues] was held to organize defense of the peasants. This congress gave unconditional support to the national university students' struggle.

The working class also is not quiet. The Dominican longshoremen, like the East Coast dock workers in the United States, are fighting mechanized loading and unloading procedures. The taxi drivers are preparing for a new strike if the promises the government made during their strike in September are not fulfilled. The sugar workers are struggling against mechanization of the sugar industry and have gone as far as to sabotage production.

Terroristic attacks on opposition militants are continuing and in the most recent period have claimed the lives of Román Augusto Suero, Cándido Morel Taveras, and José Benedicto and Esteban Bonifacio Gibbs. Another oppositionist, Santiago Félix Carrasco, disappeared near a house where the funeral of an assassinated police lieutenant was taking place. This was the same night Morel Taveras was killed.

The largest opposition party, the Partido Dominicano Revolucionario (PRD) [Dominican Revolutionary party] of ex-President Juan Bosch, which now considers itself to be a broad united front of all anti-imperialist forces, responded sharply to these latest assassinations in the name of the opposition as a whole.

PRD General Secretary Peña Gómez declared: "Those who think that the people share their complacent attitude toward their old custom of accepting crime as part and parcel of reality and the methods of government will wake up one day and find the flame of rebellion licking toward them, creeping into their sumptuous homes, gutting the mansions and hideaways of those who have fattened at the public till."

In the context of the agitation throughout the country, the student movement has had profound impact. Most people now feel that unless the revolutionary groups get together to provide guidance and leadership to the struggles that have begun, the masses will go over their heads. The developments at the national university must be an example to the revolutionary groups. They must not let their preconceived dogmatic concepts stand in the way of unity in action.

STRIKERS ASK STUDENTS FOR HELP IN BOYCOTT AGAINST STANDARD OIL

Richmond, California

Local 1-561 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union has called for an international boycott of all products of the Standard Oil Company. The purpose of the boycott, as explained by Secretary Treasurer G.T. (Jake) Jacobs at a press conference February 27, is to "compel Standard to bargain in good faith with our union and to stop their murderous strike-breaking effort that has already resulted in the death of one striking worker."

"We will appeal for labor support from all over the world," said Jacobs. "We will appeal to those in the 'Third World' countries who fall victim, like us, to the Standard Oil Global Octopus. We

are also appealing to students at home and abroad to aid and assist us in our fight."

Local 1-561 has adopted a policy, continued Jacobs, of "trying to bring about a massive alliance against a common enemy, Standard Oil, which is in the business of manipulating and dominating the affairs of people and governments all over the world."

The oil workers local had previously endorsed the struggle of the students at San Francisco State College. Members of the union appeared at the campus to help the students. In a reciprocal action, squads of students joined the picket lines of the oil workers to help in the battle against scabs and police.

MANIFESTO OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT

[The following Manifesto of the Czechoslovak Revolutionary Youth Movement was published in the February 1 issue of the Belgian revolutionary-socialist weekly La Gauche. According to the editors of La Gauche, the RYM developed out of the November student strike in Prague. The translation from French is by Intercontinental Press.]

* * *

Living in a social system where the capitalist mode of production and capitalist productive relationships have been abolished but where a democratic, socialist society has not begun to be built; and desiring to resist the abuse of Communist ideals as well as to uphold the principle that it is our right and duty to struggle actively against all who have dishonored and abused the ideals of Communism, we proclaim the formation of the Revolutionary Youth Movement.

We are convinced that for the Czechoslovak people, as well as for the people of the USSR and the so-called people's democracies, socialism cannot be achieved without destroying the bureaucratic machine as a social stratum and establishing a system of self-management. Self-management must be introduced in all areas of social life. At the point of production, self-management must take the form of workers councils exercising political and economic power. This self-management system will enable every worker to display his energy and creative initiative, it will create the essential preconditions for the scientific and technological revolution which will eliminate underconsumption and the social inequalities that flow from it. Self-management and its social consequences on an international scale will lead to the abolition of the state and the institutions connected with it.

The road our country traveled after January created the preconditions for such a revolutionary course. This development was interrupted by the armies of the five Warsaw Pact countries.

In light of the experience we have acquired in the course of the battles waged this year for socialist democracy, and especially our experience from August to November, we are convinced that the working class will play the decisive role in this struggle. The students and the youth, however, will have an important part to play. We view this revolutionary road as a permanent revolutionary process capable of influencing the course of the world revolution. We are also convinced that:

(1) To wait passively for a "process of renewal" in the Soviet Union would be in direct contradiction to the duty of man, whose social mission, according to Marx, is to change and transform the surrounding reality.

(2) To restrict socialist activity solely to putting pressure on the party and state leadership would be politically shortsighted. Since August 26, when our party and state leadership took the path of complete capitulation to the Soviet leadership, we have seen fresh evidence every day confirming the correctness of our stand.

In the November struggles, a unity was achieved between the students and the workers that still remains firm. All our work will be directed toward consolidating this unity through mutual discussion on the problems of democracy. In this way, we will strive to broaden and deepen the revolutionary consciousness of the youth, the students, and the workers, to maintain their unity in ideology and action, and to prepare ourselves for the confrontation with the reactionary forces. Our experience in the glorious days of August and in the great battles of November will assist us in this task. We realize that it will be difficult -- although not impossible -- to wage armed resistance against the enormous military potential of the occupying powers. Equipped with forms of struggle based on passive resistance, we are convinced that the struggle of the Czechoslovak people will not only not be defeated but will also deal hard blows to the bureaucratic regimes in Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and the USSR itself. This struggle can lead to political revolution throughout all the countries of the socialist bloc encompassing 300,000,000 people, liberate entire peoples, and thus inaugurate a new epoch of socialist construction. This process in the socialist bloc will also be accompanied by anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles in the Western countries. This dual process in the East and in the West, together with the revolutionary movement in the Third World, will lead us to the world revolution.

We have weighed the risks involved in the course on which we are engaging. We have, however, no other choice. The alternative offered to us by the pre-August leaders, who remain at the head of the party and the state and who still maintain their previous posture at least partially, leads nowhere. Their blind policy, bordering on adventurism, is of a kind to plunge our country into an ever deepening political, economic, and

moral morass.

The struggle for the interests of the Czechoslovak people and working class, the struggle against all antisocialist forces (the Soviet army, the ever more influential capitulationist wing of our leadership, the right-wing faction of the Czechoslovak Communist party with its fascist-like tendencies) unites us. And in this struggle we start from the consideration that the power and activity of these forces is illegal from every point of view, both morally and juridically.

The essential lines of our activities are as follows:

(1) Creation of an organizational structure capable of serving as the basis for unity in action of the students and young blue- and white-collar workers and for bringing their different points of view into confrontation.

(2) Action, insofar as feasible, by other youth organizations of all types in the political, social, professional, and other fields.

(3) Development of unity, without rigid organizational forms, with other youth through concrete political action.

(4) Organization of political discussions aimed at a broad public.

(5) Dissemination and promulgation of political opinions and all political information by every means possible.

(6) Study of the forms of anti-imperialist struggle in the countries of the Third World and the West, and of the activities of the "extreme left" with a view toward establishing contacts with all those who support these struggles.

(7) Study, in the same way, of the activities of potentially revolutionary forces in the USSR and in the so-called people's democracies.

(8) To accord factional rights, within the framework of the movement, to all tendencies that may develop, including the right to ally themselves with other factions in the movement as they choose.

The Revolutionary Youth Movement is open to all young people regardless of their political affiliation who agree with the principles set forth in this manifesto.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS -- FOR "THE BLACK DWARF"?

[The Graphic Arts Monthly, a printing-trades journal published in Chicago, features a "World News" column that carries items from similar publications in other countries. Under the title "An Ideal Situation?" the February issue included the following report from The Print Buyer, a British journal.]

* * *

You have a weekly newspaper with a run of around 20,000. You also have money in your hand and first-class financial references. You are willing to give the printer guarantees against libel or similar legal action.

An ideal situation? Printers should be knocking at your door with production schedules and quotations clasped in each hand. But they don't, in fact they not only show little or no interest, they actually turn the job down.

Sounds a bit like a fairy story, doesn't it? But it actually happened to Clive Goodwin, publisher of the Black Dwarf, a radical left wing newspaper which believes in publishing four-letter words -- if they would be used in a simi-

lar situation in everyday language.

It happened not once, with just one printer, but almost 60 printers refused the fairly lucrative contract. The reasons given for this refusal obviously varied, but in the main most printers felt that by printing the Black Dwarf they could offend other customers and jeopardize existing contracts. Fair enough, in business one has a perfect right to refuse any job. But we wonder if 60 different printers really felt this way.

Printing a controversial newspaper does lay one open to legal proceedings, but as the publishers were willing to indemnify the printers against such actions, this factor is not as important as it first looks. We feel that the vast majority of those 60 printers just didn't want the work.

The Black Dwarf story raises two points. The first -- the moral one raised by the quantity of refusals -- depends upon your own politics on how you look at it. However, the second -- the number of printers which refuse work because they are not interested -- is a subject worth investigating.

THE PROJECTED CONFERENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES

[The following is a translation of an editorial that appeared in the January issue of Quatrieme Internationale.]

* * *

Some months after the Soviet Union and its allies sent troops into Czechoslovakia, the Communist parties, which at the outset had declared that the international conference of Communist parties originally scheduled to be held in November 1968 was premature, finally agreed in November to hold a preliminary meeting in March 1969 and to hold a congress in May.

Let us assume that nothing happens to upset these plans. Let us assume, therefore, that six months after their meeting in Budapest these parties convene in Moscow. Would we have to conclude from this that the Prague operation, which ran into a political disaster the first week, paid off after all?

Leaderships like those of the French and Italian Communist parties have retreated. Is it true, as a quite authoritative rumor has it, that these leaderships yielded after threats that Moscow would attack them directly as "opportunists"? Some delegations are even supposed to have been shown documents already drawn up on this.

It could be concluded that the Kremlin's maneuvers met with a certain temporary success in impressing the Communist party leaderships. But this is only on the surface and does not alter the true state of affairs in the official Communist world, where the convulsions will continue to worsen.

The background to this conference is highly instructive. The preceding conference of the Communist parties took place more than eight years ago. It was concluded behind closed doors with a Sino-Soviet compromise of short duration. Efforts to moderate the dispute got nowhere. Khrushchev hesitated long before giving his support to the idea of holding a new conference. This was one of the contributing causes to his downfall.

His successors, Brezhnev and Co., themselves sought a new compromise. Then they decided to conduct a campaign to get the other Communist parties to agree to hold this conference. The preparatory meeting in Budapest was a virtual failure. The Rumanians left in a huff. Then came the Prague affair which we have already referred to. In any case, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Korea, Yugoslavia will not be there. How much will the presence of a Czechoslovakia bound hand and foot mean? How many of those present will be careful

to keep the final resolutions from entailing any commitments?

Furthermore, and this is the essential thing, developments at the leadership level in the Communist parties lag considerably behind developments among the ranks of these parties and in their relations with the masses.

Let us examine more closely what such a conference might be like.

What form will it take and what relationships will it express? A sort of association of states and parties with "equal" rights replaced the rigid and monolithic system of Stalin's time. But this "equality" was formal and these rights had a bourgeois character. The Soviets could choose to send their technicians or withdraw them, to extend or deny cooperation in the economic development of other countries. They, in turn, were barred from reciprocal action toward the Soviets. The Kremlin could have nuclear arms. It disputed China's exercising the same right.

With the Prague operation the Kremlin arrogated to itself the right to send tanks and half a million men to change the leadership of a state and a party -- or to modify their policies, if it could not eliminate the leadership at once. Is this "equality"? The answer is only too clear.

In an attempt to justify this new kind of "equality," the Soviets (Pravda, September 25) have argued that equality and national independence must be viewed from a "class" standpoint. When a socialist country is threatened with backsliding toward capitalism, all the other socialist countries are concerned and are duty bound to intervene.

International solidarity against capitalism may seem to be axiomatic. But, in the circumstances, we must look at what this new "theory" of the Kremlin conceals. It by no means cancels out the policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. It does not at all have the meaning that Fidel Castro wanted to give it of defense for Vietnam, Cuba, etc. This theory was cooked up after the fact to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia. And it was just as hard to find a "counterrevolutionary danger" in Czechoslovakia as it was to find the Czechoslovaks who sent the appeal for help.

The Soviet intervention did not attack the technocratic part of the decisions of the January 1968 plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia. Instead it sought to suppress democratic rights, to restore the censorship, and to bring back police methods, etc.

In support of the intervention, Gomulka argued that there are two kinds of Communist parties -- those in power, which have to make the decisions; and those not in power, whose duty it is to follow. But his argument added little to the "theory" of the Soviets except perhaps where he confirmed that the Communist parties of France, Italy, etc., took their position in August not on principled grounds but out of concern for their relationships with the bourgeois and reformist parties.

This new "theory" of Brezhnev and others hardly covers up the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. Once again, through the voice of Gromyko, this bureaucracy has told the Americans: "Let us do what we want in 'our part of the world' and we will get along together excellently."

Neither by the deployment of tanks, nor by the conferences of bureaucrats, nor by stillborn "theories" can the great emerging crises be bottled up. If anyone doubts this, he need only think of the breadth of the crisis shaking the oldest, the most reactionary, and the most crafty of institutions -- the Catholic church. And in the very person of its clergy! The bureaucrats cannot prevent these crises; they can only postpone them, making them more painful and more costly. During 1968 great events showed that the worldwide victory of socialism looms on the horizon. The masses are waging an ardent fight. Setbacks and rotten compromises come only from bureaucratic leaderships.

The collapse of the Stalinist edifice is no more a refutation of the idea of a revolutionary proletarian international than was the collapse of the Social Democratic edifice in 1914. To the contrary, in both cases workers parties which were created to lead the workers to the revolutionary conquest of power degenerated because they became infected by a "national virus." This virus of national egoism is what must be unrelentingly combated in the workers movement.

Today, everywhere, the "leftists" and "enragés" assailing the established order are increasing in number. They are opposing the capitalist order in the advanced countries and in the colonial countries and the bureaucratic order in the workers states. Over and above the tactics that must differ in accordance with the specific conditions in every country, these movements need an overall strategy for the struggle (as the American intervention in Vietnam and the Kremlin's intervention in Czechoslovakia, among other things, have just shown).

International demonstrations in support of the Vietnamese revolution have been and remain essential. But because of their improvised, conjunctural, and loosely coordinated character, they are not sufficient. And this is why, in the face of the crisis gripping the old degenerated parties, the vanguard, whose goal is the worldwide victory of socialism, must organize not only on a revolutionary Marxist basis but on an international basis as well.

ANOTHER 200 POLITICAL PRISONERS PROCESSED IN GREECE

More than 200 opponents of the Greek dictatorship received speedy trials in late January and early February. Representing a wide range of opinions and social strata -- from workers and radical intellectuals to very old military officers who fought on the rightist side in the civil war of 1946-49, the accused had nothing in common but opposition to the regime.

Two of those tried, the painter Ioannis Petropoulos and the building worker Khristos Reklitis, told how, in addition to security police, the dictatorship is now using elite units of the armed forces to torture political prisoners. Both told of being held at the garrison of Dionysos (named after the Greek god of joy).

Reklitis testified that his foot had been broken "to pieces" and that he was beaten so badly that he received a brain concussion and passed blood in his urine. This treatment put him in the hos-

pital for a month, he said. Petropoulos said his jailers had shaved him bald and beaten him unconscious, not to extort a confession but to force him to shout, "Long Live the [Colonels'] Revolution!" He took off one of his shoes to show that four of his toenails had been torn out.

The high point of the trials was the case of ten young left-wing students and intellectuals who had confessed to bombing the Ministry of Justice building November 30. They repudiated their confessions. One of the ten, Dimitrios Dariotis, said he had signed the statement because his jailers beat him with a pipe and threatened to break his fingers. The state prosecutor Liapis conceded that he could not prove these ten guilty. But he asked four years to life for them because of their admitted left-wing affiliations. Six were given one to sixteen years.

Four were acquitted, including Dariotis, who had been given a sixteen-year sentence in a previous trial.

THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS

By Livio Maitan

Rome

The Twelfth Congress of the PCI [Partito Comunista Italiano -- Italian Communist party], held in Bologna February 8-15, was faced with a series of highly important questions concerning developments both in the international Communist movement and in Italy. What is the position of the Italian Communists toward the Soviet Union after the Czechoslovak events? What is their attitude toward the incipient crisis of capitalism in Italy? How do they define their position toward the far left forces which have emerged primarily in connection with the rise of the student movement? How do they define the party's internal structures? And how far should they go in renewing the cadres in the leadership itself?

Differences on these questions have appeared at all levels in the party and were reflected also in this confrontation of bureaucratic oligarchs, which is what CP national congresses are. Nonetheless, a composite line backed by a large majority was clearly projected. It was expressed especially in Longo's report and perhaps still more in the conclusions drawn by Berlinguer.*

Many commentators -- with their usual impressionism -- have dreamed up the term "new left" to describe some of those who made critical remarks. Actually, these speakers represented residues of the "old" Ingrao left. But -- and this should be borne in mind -- the number of critical voices at this congress was not any greater than at the last one. None of the speakers (with perhaps one exception) reflected any firmer base of support than at the previous congress.

The new element was that with Ingrao entirely reabsorbed into the party establishment and with a situation having developed in Italy fraught with explosive tensions, Pintor, Natoli, Caprara, and Rossana Rossanda leveled more specific criticisms in their remarks. In reality, they were three years late in doing what they should have done at the Eleventh Congress in 1966.

But now, because of the inevitable implications, these views appear unacceptable to the top rung of the apparatus. At the same time, however, they are too passé to interest the revolutionary left

* Enrico Berlinguer was elected vice-secretary of the party by the Central Committee after the congress.

or even the sectors of the FGCI [Federazione Giovanile Comunista d'Italia -- Federation of Communist Youth of Italy] which are more or less directly under its influence. This is the cause of the so-called new left's intrinsic weakness.

The bosses of the apparatus had no qualms about seating the exponents of these views even on the Central Committee. Their objective in doing this was obvious. They wanted to avert even limited schisms and show their broadmindedness. In fact, the "new left" will wield but very little weight in the day-to-day functioning of the party.

The right wing, which has incomparably deeper roots than the critical groupings on the left, was criticized by Longo for some of its extreme displays of factionalism. (Trivelli's group in Rome has gone furthest in such maneuvers.)* However, while it was not able to get one of its people elected to the rank of vice-secretary, the right wing nonetheless was satisfied with the basic line of domestic policy and in fact remains the preponderant component of the coalition which will continue to run the party. The essential victory for the right was symbolized by the homage which Longo paid to "Emilian concreteness" in his summary.

But, more generally, the whole line of a peaceful and democratic road to socialism, of the fundamental values of the republican constitution, of intermediate objectives -- that is, reformist gradualism, which has been taking shape as a theory since the Eighth Congress -- was strongly reaffirmed. Indeed a perspective of this sort -- in the form of a reconsolidation of democracy on a more "advanced" level than that attained in the immediate postwar period -- was projected as the solution to the country's social and political crisis.

Adopting such a perspective obviously entails closing the road to the left. In fact, all the major figures at

* Trivelli, the secretary of the Rome federation of the CP, expelled all critically-minded left elements from the federation's leading bodies, including Natoli.

** Reggio Emilia, the province whose capital is Bologna, is the party's stronghold. Communists hold numerous positions of power in the local government apparatus and the right wing is most solidly rooted there.



GENERAL SECRETARY LUIGI LONGO

the congress sought to minimize the importance of "extremism," that is, the explosion of antibureaucratic forces in the student movement and the working class. The few speeches at the congress which reflected the themes of vanguard groups were rejected out of hand.

At the same time, this perspective entails a polarization of interest toward the Socialists and a section of the Christian Democracy, whose participation is essential in the hoped-for new majority, and toward all the preparatory operations deemed possible as of now (agreements on the local governmental level and in parliament).

The possibility of a governmental solution -- that is of the PCI's participating in a government or joining a parliamentary majority -- was hinted at now and again. But precisely on this point the congress did not and could not resolve a fundamental difficulty. Its perspective of "advanced" reformism cannot be put into practice except through Communist participation in the government bloc. However, such participation seems more problematic and risky than ever at a time like the present. The Christian Democrats and their associates are not inclined to make concessions on the essential foreign policy points; and

a course of the Finnish type* would leave the CP's left flank quite open. In the last analysis, the reef on which the PCI's touted realism irremediably founders is in seeking to propose a reformist reconsolidation in a situation of prerevolutionary tensions.

As for the party's internal organizational problems, the Bologna congress approved a line of cautiously renewing the cadres in the leadership and of displaying relative tolerance toward dissent. It should, however, be made clear that this tolerance is strictly dependent on accepting the rules of the game, which in practice restrict the opposition to Platonic criticisms. It is significant, moreover, that the only critics who, in a certain sense, express the views of a strong opposition on the federal level were excluded from the Central Committee.**

Finally, the manner in which the congress confronted the problems involving the bureaucratized workers states and the Communist movement expressed both the evolution that has been under way for several years and the caution that has accompanied it. It is clear that owing to its composition, its place in Italian society, and its strategy, the PCI must dissociate itself from the Soviet ruling group more and more. And if the much discussed reduction of the size of the apparatus really does take place, it will be an important step toward conforming to onerous material limitations.*** It is also clear that membership in the Communist movement is being increasingly conceived not as adherence to the ranks of a cohesive international formation but as participation in a kind of anti-imperialist united front.

The past, however, continues to exercise considerable weight. Ties still exist with the bureaucracies holding state power which it is not in the interests of the dominant group in the PCI to sever. This is the reason for the constant watering down of the PCI's criticism in the case of Czechoslovakia and the avoidance of the most urgent questions -- first of all, withdrawal of troops. This is the reason for the repeated declarations of a desire for unity in the world movement.

* The Finnish CP takes part in the government, following a moderate policy.

** For example, Caprara of the Naples federation. More than a third of the members of this federation belong to the left wing.

*** As a result of the worsening of its relations with the Communist party of the Soviet Union, the PCI has experienced a series of financial difficulties and has projected important cutbacks in the party apparatus (more than a third of the personnel being affected according to some indications).

Solzhenitsyn's New Novel

SOVIET YOUTH IN A WORLD THEY NEVER MADE

By George Saunders

[Continued from last issue.]

A significant aspect of Cancer Ward is the picture it gives of the young generation.

Vadim Zatsyrko is a young geologist, totally devoted to his profession. His father had died in the anti-Nazi partisan struggle, and Vadim still tends to idolize Stalin, as his father had taught him to. But he has doubts.

His father used to read Stalin's speeches aloud to Vadim, "explaining what deep thought they contained and how cleverly they were put and in what fine Russian. Later when his father was dead and Vadim had grown up, he began to find the style of those speeches wooden and the ideas expressed not at all concisely; they might have been put much more briefly, and in that amount of space there might have been many more ideas. He thought this, but he did not say it out loud."

Vadim shares many of the prejudices of the bureaucracy, especially an elitism, a belief in the higher calling of the specialized scientist (whom, incidentally, Stalin had "freed from petty concerns of salaries and housing"). He wishes to do nothing but study and to carry on his scientific work in the short time his cancer will permit.

Kostoglotov and Shulubin get into discussions with Vadim; gradually they begin to shake his set view of things, which had echoed Rusanov's ideology. Above all, they throw facts and problems in his face that he had never before encountered.

Another, less fortunate, youth is Demka. He has been following the veiled debates in the literary journals, and is drawn quickly into the ferment of ideas and arguments of which Kostoglotov is the perennial promoter.

The kind of cold-water shower that the encounter with the men from the camps means for the youth is illustrated in the contrast between the geologist Vadim's view of Stalin's death and Kostoglotov's experience of that event.

Vadim remembers it as a day when old and young alike had wept. "There was such a lamentation that it seemed not as though one individual had died, but as

if all of creation had cracked."

Kostoglotov, for his part, cannot understand people reacting that way, for he remembers how it was in the camp.

"Suddenly -- they were not led out to work, the barracks were kept locked, the men were kept in. The loudspeaker outside the camp, never silent before, was turned off. All this taken together plainly indicated that the camp officers had been thrown into confusion, that some extraordinary catastrophe had hit them.

"Dismay among the masters meant glad tidings for the inmates. No work, lying abed, rations at hand. First they caught up on sleep, then they wondered, then they began to play guitars and banduras, walked from barrack room to barrack room, and exchanged guesses.

"No matter where you lock up camp inmates, the truth seeps in -- through the bakery, the bread slicing room, the kitchen. It slipped through now and spread. At first not very definitely, but, walking about the barracks or seated on a bed: 'Hey, fellows! It looks as though the big Cannibal has croaked!' 'No!' 'I can't believe it.' 'I can.' 'He should have croaked long ago.' And a great chorus of laughter. The guitars and balalaikas played louder.

"For twenty-four hours they did not unlock the barracks. The next morning, a cold day even by Siberian standards, the whole camp was lined up. The major and all captains and lieutenants were there. The major, plunged in grief, began the announcement: 'With profound sorrow...yesterday in Moscow...'

"The prisoners' rough, sharp-boned, coarse dark faces broke into grins, though they dared not exult openly. Seeing the smiles breaking out, the major, beside himself, commanded:

"'Off with your hats!'

"Hundreds hesitated on the sharp edge of the blade. They could not refuse, yet it was an added insult to bare their heads. Then, the camp joker, a natural humorist, pulled off his cap, a Stalinka of imitation fur, before any of the others -- and tossed it in the air! He had obeyed the order.

"Hundreds saw it and threw their hats in the air.

"The major was crushed.

"And after all this Kostoglotov had learned that old folk had indeed wept and schoolgirls had cried and the world had seemed orphaned."

Another representative of the young generation is the rebellious high-school girl, Asya. Tough, self-assertive and interested in a "wild, free life," her conversation is always about dancing (the new step of 1954 is rock'n'roll) and the fellows at school ("When our school was reorganized last September, the director kept only the softies and the star pupils, and sent the real fellows off to another school."). She wants to make good money ("Sports pays lots...") and to see the big cities with their department stores and specialty shops.

"Who allowed you to wear your hair like that?" the youth Demka asks her.

"Who said they allowed it? They put up a fight. We fight back."

The bureaucracy's attempts to brainwash her and her schoolmates are anything but successful. At school they were given a theme to write -- what does man live by? An outline went with it "about cotton growers and milkmaids and the heroes of the Civil War" that they were supposed to comment on. "We all wrote that we would have done the same thing. Why upset the teacher just before exams? When Sashka Gromov asked, 'May I write it differently just as I think?' the teacher said: 'Just you dare! As you think, indeed!'"

One of the girls wrote that she wasn't sure whether she loved her country and that she would have to see. "And you should have heard the teacher quack: 'That's a horrifying thought! How dare you not love your country?...You should have imbibed your love of country with your mother's milk! I want your whole composition rewritten by the next lesson.' We called her 'the Toad.'"

Asya is pure rebellion without aim. Her instincts of resisting "the Toad" and the teachings that come through the school machine are indiscriminating, and she has nothing to replace the bureaucratic ideology with, except the chase after goods and pleasures. Thus, in the long run she can be manipulated by "material incentives."

But to judge by her as a representative, the bureaucracy will have a hard time dealing with this generation when it enters the factories and plants.

The young generation has another face, seen in the grown-up daughter of the bureaucrat Rusanov. Avieta Rusanova

has gone to Moscow to make a name for herself; a chip off the old block, she has energetically used personal connections to have a book of poems accepted by a publishing house.

She wants to become a writer because she has seen the Moscow writers' colony. They "frankly enjoy all the pleasures of life, they like to drink and eat and joy-ride -- always in groups. They parody one another, it's hilarious!...The time comes to write a novel, they lock themselves up at their country homes, write two or three months, and it's done. How I like that life -- independent! free! dignified! I'm going to do everything to get into the Writers' Union." Besides, "it pays."

Here, as in many passages, Solzhenitsyn shows his contempt for the writers' tribe that has sold its soul in the service of the bureaucracy for a share of the privileges.

Avieta symbolizes the layer of young careerists, who stem mainly from the nests of the bureaucracy and benefit by the interweaving connections among the elite. This portion of the youth would like to keep the Stalinist system going for another forty years. Symbolically, she encourages her father, justifying what he had done as an informer and assuring him that the rehabilitations will not bring retribution against him.

"But you have to think flexibly," she explains, showing the small extent of difference between the two bureaucratic generations. "You have to be responsive to the requirements of the times....we have to adjust to each new period." Speaking of Stalinist writers who have gone out of vogue, she could be speaking of de-Stalinization itself when Solzhenitsyn has her say:

"But it's all temporary, they'll think it over and change back. It's one of those sharp reversals that life is so full of."

One of Rusanov's other children, his son Yura, is not just a modernized junior edition of the bureaucrat. The elder Rusanov despairs of the hapless Yura, who doesn't know how to use connections, bluff his way around, bully people, be dogmatic and authoritarian. Yura acts guilty and ashamed about his family's privileges and is puzzled and upset over the poverty and injustices he encounters when he starts out in police work. But he has no fight in him; he seems to represent the loss of confidence that the bureaucracy must encounter in itself when at last it is forced to face up to its lack of historic justification, as just an excrescence, a superfluity, a cancer.

[To be continued.]

FOR UNITED TRADE-UNION ACTION IN CEYLON

[The following open letter to all the trade unions in Ceylon, dated February 3, appeals for united action in opposing a bill that would bring the unions under further control by the capitalist government. A general strike in December 1968, symptomatic of the rising militancy among the workers of Ceylon, indicated a receptive climate for united-action proposals of this kind.

[P.B. Tampoe, one of the signers of the open letter, is the general secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union and also secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), the Ceylon section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The Minister of Labour, Mr. M.H. Mohamed, presented a Bill before the House of Representatives on 8th December 1968, to provide for the establishment of a National Wage Council.

Though the preamble to the Bill did not state the purpose for which the Council is to be set up, its real purpose is quite evident to anyone who reads the Bill with some understanding of the class interests that the Government serves: It is to assist the Government and the capitalist class in preventing or obstructing any improvement in wages or other terms and conditions of employment of any section of workers in Ceylon which may not meet with the approval of the Government, following consultation with the Council that is to be set up.

The National Wage Council will have token representation of workers' unions in it, to give it a tripartite appearance. Even if the workers' representatives are not stooges of the Government, they will in any case be permanently outnumbered by the Government officials and nominees in the Council, who will invariably combine with the employer representatives, in the common interests of the capitalist state and the capitalist class.

The Bill states that the Government and the Council shall communicate with each other through the Minister. The big Imperialist-dominated Federations of employers will thus have a statutory channel permanently established for them to advise the Government on wage policy and related matters in the so-called national interest of Ceylon. It will also enable them, with the sanction of Parliament, to wield their influence at a national level over all Wages Boards and industrial arbitration tribunals, in the matter of wage determination, overtime rates, hours of work and other terms and conditions of employment.

Our three Unions, acting together through the United Committee of Ceylon Trade Unions, wrote to the Minister on 31st October 1968, declaring that the Bill was designed, in our view, to serve the interests of the capitalist class and the Government against the workers, and asking for a discussion with the Minister on the Bill.

On 5th December 1968, the Minister granted our Unions an interview, and our representatives explained why we were completely opposed to the Bill in principle, and would refuse to have anything to do with the National Wage Council, if it was set up despite our opposition.

We pointed out that there was no need whatsoever for the Government to set up a single permanent body as a national arbiter on wages and terms of employment, with the status of a Court of Law, if all that the Minister required was "advice" on questions of wage policy. The Minister was at all times entitled to secure the advice of Government officials, like the Permanent Secretary to his Ministry and the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, who are to be the "official members" on the proposed Council, according to the Bill. The Minister was also free, at any time, to invite any trade union or group of trade unions of workers to give him their views on any wage demand or related questions in any industry. He was free to do likewise with employer organisations. On any major question of wage policy, he was also free to summon a tripartite conference of Government officials, and representatives of trade union organisations of workers and employer organisations, if he so desired. A permanent body of the kind contemplated by the Bill would serve no useful purpose whatsoever to any section of workers in Ceylon. On the contrary, it would provide the Government and the capitalist class with a very useful instrument for preventing workers from securing even the meagre wage increases that they might otherwise obtain occasionally under Wages Board decisions or through industrial arbitration, or for obstructing trade unions from securing wage increases or other improvements in terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining.

When the Minister presented the Bill to the House of Representatives on 8th December 1968, the spokesmen of the Opposition Parties stated that they were opposed to the Bill, as presented. Since the National Wage Council that the Government wants to set up will serve the purposes of the Government and the capitalist class more effectively if it is set up with the collaboration of the Opposi-

tion in Parliament, the Minister of Labour stated that he was prepared to move certain amendments to the Bill. He also stated that he had no objection to the debate being adjourned. The Minister of State, Mr. J.E. Jayewardene, then suggested that the Minister of Labour should discuss the amendments with those members who had certain points of view on the Bill, and place them before the Cabinet before the debate was resumed. The debate was then adjourned by mutual agreement between the Government and the Opposition. Thereafter, the Commissioner of Labour invited our Unions to a discussion with representatives of other trade union organizations, which is to be held at 3:00 p.m. on 12th February 1969, to enable the Minister to have the benefit of the views of the trade unions on the Bill, "for purposes of considering any changes to the Bill when the debate on the Bill is resumed in the House."

Our view is that no amendment of the Bill can alter the purpose for which the National Wage Council is to be set up. The whole idea behind it is to provide a suitable camouflage for the reactionary designs of the capitalist class and the Government against the working-class, to establish their dictatorship in the matter of wages and other terms and conditions of employment.

The workers in the Government sector have just experienced the most flagrant abuse of "Emergency" powers by the Government, in its efforts to prevent them from securing an adequate increase in their wage levels by collective bargaining. Fortunately, our Unions were able to come together with the trade union organisations that were directly involved in the strike of the Public Servants in a united and successful stand against the Government's attempt to destroy those organisations by the use of the Essential Services Order. Now, the Government has categorically refused any further negotiations with the Unions of Government Workers on their wage demands, and has informed them that they must await the report of the Salaries Commis-

sion appointed by the Government to advise the Government as to what improvements may be granted to them in the matter of wages.

It is the same Government that is now seeking to set up a National Wage Council, as a permanent controlling body on wage matters pertaining to all classes of workers, with direct representation in it of the most powerful groups of capitalist employers in the country, and with the legal status of a Court of Law. Once such a body is set up, every wage demand of any importance will be met by the Government and the employers with the stock reply -- "Let us await the advice of the National Wage Council". Any strike that takes place before the "advice" is given, or after it is given will be declared to be "against the national interest". Then "Emergency" powers will be used to suppress the strike, if it cannot be defeated by the use of black-legs, by false propaganda and other methods normally used against strikes.

We request all trade union organisations that have been invited to meet the Commissioner of Labour for a discussion on the National Wage Council Bill on 12th February 1969 to join us in categorically opposing the Bill, and in demanding the abandonment of the attempt to set up a National Wage Council, for any of the purposes envisaged in the Bill.

Yours fraternally,

THE CEYLON MERCANTILE UNION,

P.B. Tampoe
General Secretary,

THE CEYLON BANK EMPLOYEES' UNION,

W.E.B. de Mel
President,

THE CEYLON ESTATES STAFFS' UNION,

G. Rajagopal
General Secretary.

MEXICAN MAGAZINE CALLS ATTENTION TO IMPORTANCE OF YSA CONVENTION

"Who Will Make the Revolution in the United States?" [Quién Hará la Revolución en Estados Unidos?] is the title of an extensive article by John McCoy in the February issue of Por Qué?, the independent radical magazine published in Mexico City (circulation 150,000). The main feature of the article is a report on the convention of the Young Socialist Alliance held in Chicago last January.

McCoy outlines the general back-

ground in which the convention took place. The worldwide upsurge of the student youth is, in his opinion, one of the outstanding developments in the current situation. The highest point so far in this upsurge was the May-June events in France last year. In the United States, the two main factors in the radicalization of the youth have been the war in Vietnam and the black liberation struggle.

All this has led to great ideologi-

cal ferment and the appearance of currents represented by such labels as the "New Left," "Black Power," "Student Power," and the "Red University." The biggest controversy concerns what forces can be counted on to make the revolution.

The answer offered by the delegates at the convention of the Young Socialist Alliance was the working class. McCoy cites in particular the arguments advanced on this point by George Novack, a guest speaker at the convention. McCoy also adduces the orientation of the Young Socialist Alliance. Its support of opposition within the U.S. armed forces to the war in Vietnam in itself constitutes a way of approach the American working class in view of the class composition of the conscript army sent abroad.

McCoy appears to have been much

impressed by the convention's size, its international ties, as indicated by the presence of observers from other countries, and the revolutionary seriousness of the delegates.

"Among other things," he says, "the convention of the Young Socialist Alliance agreed to: organize demonstrations against the war in Vietnam; develop intensive propaganda among the soldiers in the U.S. army; form action committees, strategic coalitions with the most variegated groups; engage in individual and collective actions.

"Every means must be employed to raise the masses' level of consciousness so that a popular party can be built in order to crystallize a revolution of the masses."

880,000 IN JAPAN DEMONSTRATE AGAINST RISING PRICES

An estimated 880,000 trade unionists and housewives demonstrated in cities throughout Japan February 23 to protest rising prices. The actions were called by Sohyo [General Council of Trade

Unions] and Churitsu-Roren [Liaison Council of Independent Unions]. A February 23 Associated Press dispatch reported that demonstrations took place in 352 cities and towns.

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